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Rochester, MN 55902  
July 5, 2009

Stephanie A. Strength  
11400 Independence Ave. S.W. MAIL STOP 1571  
Washington, DC 20250-1571

Re: Cap X 2020 Rochester – LaCrosse 345 KV Project Routes B17 & B18 RUS EIS

Dear Ms Strength:

We support, respect, and appreciate the need to plan for the future and meet the growth demands for electrical services in S.E. Minnesota caused by the growth in both population and business in the area. Likewise, today's need for personal stress relief with quiet and solitude or leisure activities and leisure open space is a growing situation and priority in people's lives. Public and private recreational areas, residential sites close to nature, and adjacency to water away from the pressures of urban city living, is a highly sought after and premium commodity for this reason. This section of the Zumbro river valley and Lake Zumbro are the closest adjacency to Rochester and one of the few useable lakes and rivers in S.E. Minnesota. To run a 345 K.V. high pole power line through this rural community is a hard-core, maximum impact, incompatible industrial intrusion, and should not be done. What is the total impact?

- Personal impact: Purchased 80 acres to provide future personal home site and residential development at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars.
- Invested tens of thousands of dollars to create a roadway access over 2,400 feet long to building sites.
- Invested several thousand dollars to get electric services into property.
- I am very concerned about the visual as well as electrical and magnetic field impact on my use of this property, especially my location being developed as a home site. It is only 100 to 300 feet from the proposed route B18 center line.
- I am concerned about the noise issues that come with high power lines. Included is the power "hum" at quiet times and the "whistle" created by high winds along the bluffs. How disruptive are these items to the serenity of the valley?
- This portion of the bluff has a substantial iron content in the subsurface rock. (a mining company once owned it with the intent of mining iron ore.) How does this impact or extend the magnetic field influence?
- My property value, resale and future residential development potential will be substantially impaired with the power line running full length of the property. What is this loss?
- If necessary, I am prepared to hire appraisal and legal counsel to cause an adversarial take of the entire 80 acres due to the negative impacts if this route is chosen.
- Routing a major trunk power line through this location along the bluffs and across the Lake Zumbro would present a major negative visual impact both upstream and downstream through the heart of this beautiful, rural community setting. What is the magnitude of the impact on the quality of life in the adjacent area?

## I-161-001

Your comment has been noted. Socioeconomic impacts to property values affected by the transmission line will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

## I-161-002

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to the aesthetic quality of the areas surrounding the transmission line will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

I-161-005

I-161-006

I-161-007

I-161-008

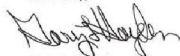
I-161-001

I-161-002

- I-161-003** • The bluffland zoning ordinance in this area is highly controlling for any visual impact or disruption to the bluffs. Construction of roads and buildings by individual landowners is prohibited in this zone for that reason. Should a power line be exempted from this policy/philosophy?
- I-161-009** • The Minnesota D.N.R. has previously considered and is currently pursuing a “scenic and wild river” formal designation for this area to preserve the natural beauty of the river, bluffs and valley for the benefit of the general public. How does the proposed power line fit it?
- Topography along this route rises up to 320 feet vertically from the river to the bluff top (El 860 – El. 1180).
- There are numerous steep slopes, cross slopes and ravines to be crossed with the route identified. Some slopes are in the 90 foot vertical rise per 100 foot horizontal distance category.
- I-161-010** • A portion of the soils along the river terraces are very sandy and highly erodible. Construction and maintenance traffic is detrimental and is an environmental risk. Currently there are locations in this area with serious erosion caused by past logging operations. What is the potential impact from the power line clearing, construction, and ongoing maintenance?
- I-161-011** • There is a longstanding occupied eagle’s nest along this river bluff within 100 feet of route B18. Are high voltage power lines compatible with this and the waterfowl nesting areas along this river?
- I-161-012** • Maintenance access to service this area would be quite difficult. In addition to the slope and cross slope issues, there are few roads in the area. Access would need to come from the east end and travel the easement right of way over very rugged terrain for over a mile to access the westerly portions of this route. Is this the best route for maintenance needs?
- I-161-013** • There are two private Christian camps adjacent to our property: Camp Victory abuts our west property line and is a large growing summer camp for children and year around adult retreats. They have their primitive tent camping all along the bluff terrace where route B18 is proposed. Woodland Camp, a long established camp for children and adult groups lays full length along our south property line and would be significantly impacted by route B18. Route B18 goes directly through their camp and could well put them out of business. Is that appropriate and necessary?
- I-161-004** Notwithstanding, we suggest serious consideration of meeting the power grid expansion by utilizing existing roadway and utility easements and right of way, such as the County Highway 12 and 247 corridors that already disrupt the countryside environmentally. Another option would be to transverse this area further north at a location with lesser scenic bluffland, environmental, recreational, and residential impacts.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns and better understand the environmental impacts of this proposal.

Sincerely,



Gary L. Hayden

(507) 289-6744

### I-161-003

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to the aesthetic quality of the areas surrounding the transmission line will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Bluffland ordinances are outside of the RUS jurisdiction, however the routing process will follow established statutes.

### I-161-004

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The project is still in the development and planning stages and the utilities have not yet permitted a route for the transmission line.

### I-161-005

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to land use will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

### I-161-006

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to human and livestock health and safety with regard to EMF will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

### I-161-007

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts resulting from operational noise will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**I-161-008**

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to geology and soil resources caused by the transmission lines will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**I-161-009**

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to the aesthetic quality of the areas surrounding the transmission line will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**I-161-010**

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to geology and soil resources caused by the transmission lines will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**I-161-011**

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to wildlife will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**I-161-012**

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts resulting from construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line will be addressed in resource sections throughout the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**I-161-013**

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

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